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New Apparition Poems 2013-2014

Adam Fieled

#717

On why it has to be that writing
comfortable garbage is the inevitable
byproduct of living comfortably, with
each fresh hell I wonder why the hooks
towards artful utterance are set this
way, & why I must become such an oyster
just to confer into a leaking bucket,
insecurely hung from abraded cables,
a blue droplet not even of blood but
of nectar, or wine, or whiskey—

#1547

this is
what
words
amount
to—
festivals
of ash,
collapsed
into urns,
held
up by
timid folk
for the
bold to
scatter.

#1901

Conshohocken power lines in the rain—
edges of buildings cut through whitened
sky, as rising light topples privacy for
squat-dwellers on the Schuylkill— I see
power defining itself in lines, acrobatic,
space-consonant, but always working
within suburban, subaltern parameters—
eternity decoyed from a rusty beneath.

#2009

Imagery is cheap, with doll-houses beneath—
play a pretty part in art-world, against
all but solipsism, is what you chose, as
now you're quarantined beneath
the weight of your pretensions, impaled
on the permanent lightning of your
own cruelty doubled back— you can
see yourself at the openings, directing
action, mouthing lines, finagling
the press, except your body remains
junked, held in no junket, & in the corner
the bucket holds only your shit—

of which, of course, your lovers are
compelled to partake. I, for one,
am still hot for who you were as a blonde—
the shit-bucket side of you right on
the surface, then, shades of puke green
you used, and use, like El Greco: his, & your own,
shit-buckets. I can forgive this version
of shit that happened, but what will happen,
we'll see— from here to Powelton Village, again—

#2021

America has its own pathetic fallacy—

not that the moon loves the clouds,
but that someone who sweats us
really gets us, is watching from
above, tying together loose ends,
reducing boundaries, corralling
the populace into a virtual arena
where we watch ourselves defeat all foes
eternally. Just as mountains kiss
the sky, all things happen for a reason,
things right themselves in the end.

Now, we're pale for weariness,
wandering companionless, and if
we're climbing heaven, we feel hellish—

#2030

For those with roots in a cesspool,
for whom family history is bathing
in muck, there can be no question
that symbolic language solves any
problems— behind a square glass
façade, there are only acknowledgments
of prevailing currents, with/against
us, always a sense of arbitrary,
rootless movement, continual
transgression, moments fathered
into existence in hopes of some
seminal thrust, as we're burned
ceaselessly up from perpendicular births—

#2007

What does it mean, for blood to work?
If my blood works with your blood, are
we merely bloody? It can't be that we're
the same person twice, or that the same
foundation inheres in/for us. It must
be a matter of temperature, we demonstrate
sameness by hot & coldness— & by manifesting
identical aptitudes to be pierced, bring
fluid to the surface, heave towards horrors
& ecstasies. I walk down Butler Pike,
astounded by the sky's whiteness against
us, and am vertiginous with the dizziness
of deep dirt dredged from depths of us,
stung raw by time, streets crossed as we are—

#1921

If I see you in my mind's eye,
as my own best blood made solid,
a monolith in crimson (around
which curious apes play, unimpeded),
how high you rise into the blue air
must be determined (for me) by what
blood you are willing to bury beneath
the earth of what else you are —
someone else's solid blood, too.

#2027

On a snowy morning, she's primed to
drink before noon, and while the buzz
lasts the snow and the gin dissolve her
into graceful oblivion. But the after-
noon drags, and by two she's ready to
nap, degraded as usual by her own
abiding uselessness and a past which
not only makes no sense, is a tattoo
needle which keeps tinting her flesh
the freakiest way, so that she feels
repulsive in her own skin. The game
in Plymouth-Whitemarsh is all about
homogeneity, fronting with family,
& she's scattered to the winds all attempts
to establish a conventional brood.
Everything about her registers as weird
here. No one wants to hear about art.
I know how far she may fall, & why.
I register here as weird, too. Forget it.

#2042

If you attempt to
create something
solid from language,
all the million
harrows of your
inadequacy must
pursue you, what's
hollow is harrowing—
past your control.

As for "I," you'd
better sacrifice
the whole construct,
complexities & all,
as it is all evanescent,
& circuits back to
language show you
all the magic
prophecies of non-
existence you not
only fulfill, but embody—

#2057

If you're lucky, you look for
the dread of facing morning,
can't find it— you find what
ever solidity you have, move
on. But its there, & in snow-
piles in parking lots, trees
lining the little Conshy peak,
stores yet to open on Fayette
Street, it hides, waiting to
envelope, dissolve, bury
anyone who falters for even
a minute, in its bloody maw—

#2072

A lesson in the world
is a lesson in how cheap
human life can be— I
walk through the amusement
parks of the "great epochs of
the world," realize that
the only permanent attractions
(usually) are intoxicating smoke
& flattering mirrors. If I go
out of my way to eschew
the roller coasters, its
because the upper,
stalemated air is cyanide.

#2090

I'm, I wanted to tell her,
that last bit of Russia you
just can't conquer— so,
as you retreat for the last
time, with knowledge that
the war is turning in my
favor, I sigh that humanity
has to be what it is— a little
extra strychnine in my morning
coffee, to settle me down—

#2094

On an unusually warm day,
three days before Christmas,
the simple fact of a solid grey
sky redeems what torturous
human complexities I have
no way out of— where the sky
begins is where we end. From
the ground, where greyness, the fogged,
dissevers, I heave my own
brain into the sky— there it goes— thoughts
in succession I used to have,
ditties, the sublime tomfoolery
of the English-language canon
(nightingales spooking spooky owls)
with German Idealism, French
Symbolism grafted on top—
then, my own shit, to the extent
that the big rocks of it have to
be there— but the paintings
is where it ends, & a sense of gratitude
that I received a sublime gift three
times I was never owed— the paintings,
begun to be sunken in the right way,
are the Christmas present I've been
looking for, even as we all heave,
mystified, from within the Recession's fog—
colors laid, impasto, on my soul,
have taken on permanence—

#2104

If I don't have a lot of nerve,
somebody does— trying, in
unspeakably unspeakable times,
to speak the unspeakable—

rain falls on Fayette Street at
dawn, I'm having half a nervous
breakdown, on an acid trip,
pinning branches to the sky—

#2135

Out of the apartment, striding down
East Eden Street, I note how it might
feel to be homeless— desperate free-

falls into nothingness. I'm also gladsome
I'm not homeless yet; desperation,
thankfully, distant, inaccessible.

Yet also inaccessible is the warmth
of a life richly lived, which I
used to know well. As the sun rises,

something or someone other than "I"
sees the whole tableaux, meets me in
the middle with it from above—

wires, row-homes, branches, lights—
the latent morning tense, trying,
East Eden still asleep, I'm awake—

#2136

The encumbrance,
in a recession, as in Dante,
against Wordsworth—
there are no incidents
or situations. People
huddle in corners, die
to themselves. Imagination
colors things black, white, grey—

nature's primordial green
struck here from view.
The blackness is immaculate,
in being what we
are not, full. The "perfect image of
a mighty mind" inverts into
a perfect Void, hollowed under us.

Flooding in a parking lot, reinforced.

#2138

No matter how you define freedom,
he writes, *no one wants to be the kind*
of free I mean to be, which is so damned
free I can't see five feet in front of me.

Secretly, he just wants (he knows) to be
a kid again, everything taken care of,
supper waiting on the table; what
he partakes of being (hopefully) the kind of
bread & wine (soiree!) he imagines
must've transpired for the living
Christ, when he lived—

yet here we have freedom defined
in manuscripts abandoned, dreams
deferred, my own inbox trolled
with notice from an old stomping
ground that he's being stomped
to death, doing a textual inversion
routine, now that the books
racket has become too much a stricture—

I can't be free, I write, *because*
I'm bound by old laws of suffering & duty—
I'm so damned un-free, call it Calvary,
I'll agree— but freedom can't see—

#2131

Wifty old Wordsworth does his time-
loops, the arabesques glisten when
they're good, you can ride them

as on a monorail above the turmoil
of a trying present— a past not your
past, a magnetic pull of otherness—

but, ultimately, you look up, there's
a fracas, as you attempt not to live
on credit. The sun shines on whatever

time-traipse you undertake, but it's
a timid sun, with so much pain in it,
waste— & the monorail price you pay,

with all that transcendentalism, is that
weather threatens to dissever you from
the earth, cast you out into space, where,

free from the fracas (all money, sex
attendant), you'll never be loved by
a human being again, but are free to

wander, via the monorail, the desert
of empty space, until you let off onto
a frozen planet, when all you wind up

wanting is money & sex— the deep
filth, shaken & stirred again, please—

#2132

Why it means what it means
to be "lyrical," to write from
the perspective of an "I," & how
this changes in a recession—
I don't pretend to understand,
I just sit around doing the work,
hunkered down in my mind-eye's
bunker, where there's enough
sand to fill precisely one hour-
glass, & I have two eyes to see—
everything situational, contingent,
nose on the face. The joke is that
the spirit, genie, or cosmic egg in poetry
can never, will never do "nose on the face,"
even numbers in lyricism molest
attempts to be plain, & so my own
plainness is set in place to manifest
the extreme debauchery of a landscape
permanently scrambled, scrambling—
& in the recession, I can still afford eggs—
cosmic, carnal, cramped, called, cadet-like—

#2126

To feel your life flabby, as it
becomes clear you were supposed
to be gone before— I swim around in
the muck of semi-solvent survival-ism,
live anxiously,
but words channeled through me
dance in novel ways— my compact,
against Wordsworth's (at least some
of the time) is still skin on skin,
& I'm still real— thoughts in succession
(rehearsed, I would confess)
as I circumvent the Zeitgeist

with a final Center City pub-crawl,
South Street on out,
Trixie Belle pestered also, in her
red overcoat, by the bartenders
giving her a hard time,
as though she's spent nights here
cadging drinks (again)—
overseen (as we are) by an actress, upstaging us—

#2086

She got the text as she was lying
down drunk— her old boss had
jumped from a balcony & died.
She stood up, peered
out the window— full moon-shine on
Abington. No cars had gone by for
twenty minutes— she forwarded
the text to me, & paced—

by the time I reached her, humor
& the macabre mixed in her
voice: "Isn't this where we're
all at today? Isn't this the end
of things, across the board?"
Jack Daniels sat there, in her
hand, thinking that also—
for those times, I thought,
that agony charmingly occurs
sans the rigor of discipline,
& we fall apart harum-scarum,
I considered doing SEPTA
to Abington for the night,
still crazy after all these years, right?

But she had the answer, having
already known me for twenty
years, almost Biblically, or maybe
it was Biblically, my brain
having dissolved into the mélange
of portents, erased parts fastened
as they were— "If you want the Lord
to forgive you, Adam, you'll
have to forgive the Lord."

#2080

So much fear inheres in
days, beside hopes our
lives will finally freeze
on a moment, a perspective
we can live with, then just
cease— I watch this
conversation, two women
as they dissolve into each other,
each other's submerged
(to me transparent) despair—
it is how they're adorned,
their adornment, earrings,
rings, watches, bracelets, wherein
I feel the day's sagging skin—

#2085

Mysteries of the Main Line—
why, for instance, it has to
be that no one mentions
anything substantial, but
are able, beneath the surface,
to generally shyster in all
directions with the same
self-complacent smile,
until the jig is up & they,
too, find themselves dead—
at forty or fourteen— no
one gets out of Main Line philosophy,
one way or another, but
this philosophy of clown-masks—
who dictated these terms, I ask?

#2051

Each day, I'm hollowed by
the Recession's vacuum, & either
create my life or perish— no sense
of safety or coherence from a storied
past. As I walk Conshohocken's
streets, I note the sky, just before
dawn, amusing itself in pastels—
ice on branches over tiny front/
back yards— all held self-sufficiently
in time's objective indifference,
which I now feel passionately about,
for & against, December's circuits—

#1899

For me to seize a hatred, embrace
it, I'd have to perceive a new level
of visionary deadness, against
the visionary, or something akin— see
her stand, choked by bright colors
hewn into silk, not lost in dizziness
only because dizziness is her element,
and why I hate her is because what her
dizziness denies are possibilities of
anything touching anything at all—
she walks out the white door with
the clear center, into murky rain—

#2040

Idolatry of words, signs— idolatry,
also, of anti-cognition— an American
century subaltern, already (strangely)

lost, forgotten in daily squabbles for
survival, as money is either there or
not, freefall becomes shorthand for

normalcy. I walk through the ambient
museum of human angst, buttons
pressed, resources tapped but not

drained, stop before an idol cast in
bronze, face besmeared with grease,
& realize the guards are murdered—

I can take what I want, want nothing—

#1022

Alcohol headiness, my head is thus just
a pinata for Gods to inhabit, but I don't
ask Nietzsche for help, I'm too mad to,
or bad to— "the best of life," right? In

any case, there's a place behind this old
mountain for me to walk a tightrope
over humanity. I said this to a guy in
spats in a dream I had of Berlin before

the war. It came true back then before
the war, which erupted from my glass.

#2124

You can lust after simplicity
as after (if you'll just be honest)
 a hot, available piece of ass—
if you get both at once, the keys
you may retrieve to sweet
oblivion between her legs
have their own in-built
obsolescence, after the complexity
crunch of your one-time padlock
picking— luckily, obsolescence
is simple, too— as is a simple,
ten-second memory
to thank God for, simply—

#581

Over smoky bar-
room nights, finished
in several half-forgiving
beds, were piths of blood,
celestial spirits hovering,
noting I seemed
remorseless? Either
way, I suppose, you
sin if you think you
sin, and I say (believe) maybe.
Only, I notice that poetry
feeds on human energy.
So the carnal, as ways
& means of getting
close to someone else
(their energy) is nature's
own piece de resistance
in humanity's direction.
Right? I had to be an
animal some way—
bring home the meat.
Conshy: all this family
fronting, I'm happy still to be
mostly alone. Call me
a perv, if you must. I tried.

#1300

On the trip I had one mind,
everyone else had twelve or
more, I maintained weight,
sat around doing nothing as I
wandered a baffling universe
of locked-in zeroes spinning
all around the two talismans
that gave the apartment its
currents, Jimmy the Face,
Martha the Mask, and they
slayed all my enemies, countless
piles of shit, while fame gave
me bark to shave off and I
complained of mirrored graves—

#1913

You watch, as in slow motion glass-
hewn objects crash to the ground, as
streams back and forth confirm, once
again, you've cracked into a slug-pile
of heartless psychopaths—I stand
aside, jaundiced, wearing my own
glasses, knowing blown glass to be
how human interstices are knit, words
to be an absolute sky of glass, and here
I am, speaking to you in transparencies—

#266

The majestic transformation of
how the world is working within us
is evidenced by her clothing— she's
spread across the cloud-streaked
autumn sky, which drops its own
faint meteors, little sun streaks,
around the interior of the Conshy
Starbucks, just by the jade pendant
hung down onto her upper chest.
The sun this morning, like me,
seems to be half-kidding— I envision
her covered in dead autumn leaves.
Something in the world just is.

#1176

Your guts tell you when
something's wrong— here
I am at war in darkness—
no moss over me, no
camouflage— I lean forward—
but oh the degenerate trenches,
so very boring, passion kept
to a minimum, fires aglow
never, and my guts fear
the soulless twerps, jealous
that I might be brought low
by some version of cripple's
wisdom— Conshohocken—

#1302

If you're ever making love, and at
the moment of orgasm have a vision
of your mentor jumping from a high
window, don't resort to watching TV
after, especially if you've just impregnated
your lover, the emptiness in your eyes
will be incomparable, enough to send
both your mentor & attendant angels
scattering away from your books,
because (remember!) you do write
books, you're not just an animal
(the quagmire being, of course, that
in this world they do have animals
writing books, even if it is only these
days, & who ever pine for the feral phrase,
remain bemused that TV *reaches more lays*).

#1088

Bottoms of barrels— where I
go to get "I" words to represent me,
but constructs constrict me
down to levels of humid air sucked
vacuum-fast out past sky—
"I" can never be "I."

The part of space that's like
the barrel's bottom (free
of intrusive presences of steeply
constructed souls), gets fucked
by the eternal under "I"—
who inverts Nietzsche, no "why."

#218

The little bourgeois runt has had enough
of feeling weak. He's running five miles a
day, eating raw eggs, seeing three shrinks,
shagging his wife most nights, loving his
kids, digging into his work like never before
(and oh what important work it is), and, if
he may say so himself, become such a lunatic
that if they have to scrape his remains from
the bottom of the Schuylkill, he won't be
surprised. All to rebel against impinging
poverty, because the world is crumbling.
Not with a bang but with a whimper, he
gulps down a beer with dinner, where he
preened and postured like a winner with
everything knotted in his stomach. If he
were raised to be rugged, he'd still be dead.

#219

Everyone always looks forward to a fight
if they've planned the fight themselves—
they'll brave the anticipated death, shake
the anticipated curse, wake to hear Gabriel's
trumpet when it resounds like manna as they
are already grave-bound. But nobody has
ever known what to do about slow decay,
gradual erosion, slow-motion entropy, the
kind of shit that actually happens. You wake
and half a handful of things have turned to
shit, then three months of peace, then the
same thing again. What this "I" has learned
is that not everybody wins, not everybody
lives, if you've got it in you to live you can
still get killed, as deathly morons pull up
a winning ticket for twenty more years of
grand larceny. The lesson is that there is no
lesson. What you can learn is to let go of it,
everything, and let Gabriel wank the human horn unbidden—

#154

I'm not blind or slimy, she told
him, you're just an asshole with
unrealistic expectations. Summer
outside: black and white buildings,
covered in sweat. The picture evens
out (roughly) to brown. She swoons
at the idea of touching. I'm done
with her, he tells himself, strained
to keep his hands off el primo real
estate. But the parents-built picket
fence is stuck up his ass. Someday
he'll jounce it out, impale her on it—
right through the heart. I wonder, she
chimes blithely, if you can define slime?

#2054

Twenty years ago I stood in
the West Pattee stacks, as she
wove a weird pattern around
the center aisle tables to see
me (for once, finally) face to
face, elongated eyes stretched
torturously across her severely

boned, mask-hard visage— she
was a disease for me, & when she
prowled Logan Square, jumped
witch-like into my bathroom
mirror, I knew that, too. Paint
was all over her body, I knew why—
life under life, surfaces over surfaces—

livid with promises, the haunted
ones are ones who haunt. Works
never completed, you learn, move
around, storing their electricity,
getting you ready, or me, for electric
light to erect its unholy temple
somewhere unseen, also livid,

so light-switches flick on, regardless—

#2070

To lunge from a pile of shit into
pure ecstasy— I wonder how its done,
even as I occasionally do it. If you
hit the right frequency, maybe sun
light hitting icicles on branches, an
intersection arranged into a decent
pictorial composition, or even the
extreme modesty of a free cookie,
you get it, that there is a positive
eternity to balance the infernal ones,
try to hold onto that frequency, & I have—

#2099

Established by the Stygian Council,
the American insurance game wraps
around American foliage like a million
snakes, snake-slime at the ready to be spat
at all of us who depend on its grasp,
rhetoric directly from the Dark One—
so much America, workers, scroungers,
will be called back to the Lord the first
time the reach is made— the horrible sickness
in which insurance is love, forgets that
love, genuine love, is the only genuine

insurance, if you can get it— but what you
do get is your mail, & become Hamlet, do you
open it or not, do you take longevity seriously
anymore, insurance being an old, mad, lame,
despised, dying enterprise, but hey bureaucrats
will redo it, in, oh, about fifty years— be patient!

#2095

What a human life is worth—
either you keep pushing your
thoughts upwards or you don't,
& complexities are there to work
with, emotions— its not a parking
lot being rained upon on a dreary
Sunday morning, its wont (the
mind) to issue, from positions
of singularity into multiplicity,
even, literal knives to make their
own incisions, mountains/valleys
endure differently, worthiness/humanity—

#2107

Infinite complexities of pleasure, pain—
how the natural world impinges upon
humanity's artifice— we are at the sky's
mercy, it casts its complexities in color

upon what we attempt to blacken/whiten—
how pathetically fallacious we are. I climb,
perfect images of measly minds here to
deal hemp mock my impatient teardrops—

but cleanliness, here, is the soul's last stop—

Credits

Cricket Online Review— #218

Eratio Postmodern Poetry— #717, #1344

Fixator Press— #1547

Ink Pantry— #2051, #2135

Tears in the Fence— #1901, #1913

The Helios Mss— #2107

Upstairs at Duroc— #1022

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